

From RNM <moriokar001@hawaii.rr.com>

Sent Monday, October 11, 2010 12:19 pm

To hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov

Cc RNM <moriokar001@hawaii.rr.com>

Subject Opposition to HIHWNMS MPR Expansion and Inclusion of Additional Species

Aloha:

I write in strong OPPOSITION to elements of the management plan review (MPR) being considered for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS), that 1) expands the sanctuary boundaries, and 2) seeks inclusion of other species to the current sanctuary.

1) Expansion of the sanctuary boundaries is unnecessary as the current boundaries are NOT the reason for the recovery of the Hawaiian humpback whale but rather, the result of the cessation of commercial whaling. Therefore, such a sanctuary and boundaries were and are unnecessary.

2) Adding other species that are already protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and creating a sanctuary for them is duplicative, unnecessary and a waste of precious taxpayer \$. Sanctuaries do not protect these far and wide ranging species. The closing of the NWHI from fishing (taking away forage) was one of the reasons given to protect the Hawaiian monk seal, but today they are still in decline, and predation by sharks and aggressive male mobbing are being noted as primary problems with their recovery. But, those who have moved or been moved to the MHI where there is supposedly less forage, are doing much better than their cousins in the NWHI. I wonder why? However, I have a great concern and pray everyday that one of these seals will NOT injure, maim or God forbid, kill a human being in the MHI as their population expands. Think about this.

3) However, I do support the on-going education and outreach elements of the existing sanctuary charter which reads in part: "The primary focus of such efforts lies in educating the public about existing regulations that protect humpback whales, enhancing the enforcement of these laws, and working cooperatively with other agencies to increase awareness of humpbacks and their habitat. " and, including the other species for this purpose is commendable. Sanctuary boundaries are not needed to conduct such education and outreach efforts.

When a protected species is found to have recovered, it is time to move on. Recent SPLASH estimates of the Hawaiian Humpback whale stocks in the N. Pacific indicates that it is around 18,000 animals up dramatically from the 1400 that existed prior to the ESA.

It is truly time to move on and thank you for continuing your educational focus.

Sincerely,
Roy N. Morioka